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DE RUEHSN #0326 0772221
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 172221Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9188
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 000326

SIPDIS

STATE PASS USTR
STATE PASS USAID/LAC
STATE ALSO PASS USTR
USDOC FOR 4332/ITA/MAC/WH/MSIEGELMAN
3134/ITA/USFCS/OIO/WH/PKESHISHIAN/BARTHUR
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES OF EL SALVADOR'S NEW CAFTA-DR
OFFICE

11. SUMMARY. The Government of El Salvador's new CAFTA-DR Office at the Ministry of Economy provides a dedicated staff to monitor CAFTA-DR issues, including implementation, follow-on agreements, and consistency with other trade agreements. The new office should help simplify our efforts to monitor CAFTA-DR implementation and compliance. END SUMMARY.

12. In late 2007, the Ministry of Economy (MINEC) established a new office to advise the Minister and Vice-Minister on CAFTA-DR issues. Currently the office has two staff: Jorge Mauricio Guzman, former deputy director of MINEC's Trade Policy office, and Mr. Rodolfo Villamariona, the GOES market access negotiator for CAFTA-DR. Their objectives are to ensure the effective implementation of CAFTA-DR, to track follow-on agreements and negotiations (e.g., the Pocketing Amendment), to monitor foreign (including U.S.) legislation that affects CAFTA-DR, to provide a clearinghouse for CAFTA-DR information, and to avoid erosion of preferences by ensuring consistency between CAFTA-DR and other trade agreements. At the request of Vice-Minister Johanna Hill, they also specifically monitor environmental and labor issues. According to Guzman, the only area of CAFTA-DR in which they are not involved is intellectual property rights (IPR), which remains with the IPR experts in MINEC's Trade Policy office.

13. The CAFTA-DR office supplements rather than replaces the Trade Agreements Administration Office (DATCO) and the Trade Policy Office (DPC) in CAFTA-DR related matters. For example, DATCO would still represent the GOES at a CAFTA-DR Coordinator's Conference, but the CAFTA-DR office would have the lead in preparing for the conference.

14. Comment: The creation of the CAFTA-DR Office helps to ensure that the GOES does not lose track of CAFTA-DR issues, especially while the Ministry of Economy is busy negotiating other free trade agreements, including an Association Agreement with the European Union. The dedicated office, with staff who were actively involved in the negotiations, should simplify our monitoring of CAFTA-DR implementation and compliance and provide us a ready point of contact for CAFTA-DR issues. End comment.

Glazer